Congresswoman helps save RRWC

NE Colorado farmers avoid CREP funding from being cut off

Last week, Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04) helped farmers in the Republican River Water Conservation District (RRWCD) of Northeast Colorado by preventing the elimination of conservation funding in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her work will likely help farmers avoid court mandates, and consequential economic deterrents, throughout Kit Carson, Lincoln, Logan, Philips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma counties.

The Congresswoman succeeded in preserving $176 million for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and critical programs within that, such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). These were cut by the Senate Agriculture Committee in the Agriculture Reconciliation Act of 2005.

"The bottom line is farmers throughout seven Colorado counties are depending on these federal funds in order to follow a well negotiated deal, without court interference, and prevent a downturn in the sensitive rural communities," said Musgrave. "Our water resources along the Plains are precious and require a framework that balances the needs of farmers in Colorado as well as Nebraska and Kansas. I am pleased agriculture leaders in the House heeded my petitions and have kept the funding in place."

The federal funding is a critical resource that will allow the RRWCD to carry out its plan for compliance with the Colorado/Nebraska/Kansas Compact. Without federal funding, farmers in the region would likely face a court mandated resolution, which would not infuse money in the small rural economies like the current plan.

Serving one of the largest agricultural districts in the U.S. Congress, Marilyn Musgrave (CO-04) announced today that she was successful in securing funding in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2006. This bill passed the House today and will soon be signed into law by the President and it will provide research funding in the areas of beef cattle, wheat aphid, dryland crops, as well as animal diseases and identification.

"Farmers and ranchers are not working to just produce quality crops and meat for local consumption, but they are also striving to compete in the global market. These research funds will help them succeed in our drought stricken climate and advance the science of agriculture," said Musgrave.

Throughout this year, Musgrave has petitioned for federal funding for several high priority agriculture projects around Colorado, including the members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies to provide. As a result of her efforts, the following are some of the provisions included in the final version of this bill:

UV-B Monitoring Program: $2,184,000

The Ultraviolet-B Monitoring and Research Program at CSU is the only source on geographical distribution and temporal trends of UV-B radiation information in the country. This information assesses the negative impacts of UV radiation on crops, livestock, ecosystems and forests.

National Beef Cattle Genetic Evaluation Consortium: $880,000

The consortium consists of Colorado State University, Cornell University and the University of Georgia, as well as cattlemen and breeders from across America. Its mission is to develop and implement improved methodologies and technologies for genetic evaluation of beef cattle for the purpose of maximizing the impact genetic programs have on the economic viability, international competitiveness, and sustainability of US beef cattle producers and to provide consumers with affordable and healthy beef products.

Center for Economically Important Infectious Animal Diseases: $817,000

The center began its activities in 1998 as the first single institution to fill a national void in the integrated research on animal diseases that threaten our national economy. Their research focuses on BSE, biosecurity for livestock, the spread of Foot and Mouth Disease in wildlife, West Nile Virus, and E. coli 0157:h7.

Russian Wheat Aphid Resistance, Stress Tolerance, and Quality Enhancement of Wheat: $306,000

Researchers at Colorado State University are working to develop varieties of wheat that have improved heat and drought stress tolerance, which will serve to stabilize production under present climate conditions.